

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1517

INFO USMISSION NATO

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AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 428

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJ: MEETING WITH PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES

1. DURING CREDENTIALS PRESENTATION JANUARY 24 I SPENT APPROXIMATELY 30 MINUTES WITH PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES. ALSO PRESENT WERE SECRETARY OF STATE JORGE CAMPINOS (SOARES WAS OUT OF COUNTRY), AND FONOFF SEC GEN ANDRESON. PRINCIPAL IMPORTANCE OF MEETING WAS ITS LENGTH, SINCE NORMALLY PRESIDENT ACCORDS ONLY FOUR OR FIVE MINUTES TO NEW AMBASSADOR. SEVERAL TIMES CONVERSATION SEEMED TO END, BUT HE JUST SAT INDICATING CLEARLY HE ATTACHED SYMBOLIC IMPORTANCE TO LENGTH OF SESSION. CHIEF OF PROTOCOL TOLD ME IT WAS LONGEST EVER GRANTED NEW AMBASSADOR. I WAS ALSO THE ONLY AMBASSADOR TO RECEIVE MOUNTED HORSE ESCORT SINCE SPINOLA LEFT PRESIDENCY (COSTA GOMES, FOR REASONS OF AUSTERITY, HAS DISPENSED WITH MUCH OF POMP AND CEREMONY) THEREBY ADDING TO SYMBOLISM OF OCCASION.

2. PRESIDENT ASKED THAT I CONVEY HIS GREETINGS TO PRESIDENT FORD AND SECRETARY KISSINGER. WHILE HE OBVIOUSLY WANTED TO AVOID SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION, GIVEN NATURE OF OCCASION, HE
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DID MAKE FOLLOWING POINTS OF INTEREST:

A. AMERICAN AID PROGRAM MOST WELCOME, SINCE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WAS THE KEY TO POLITICAL STABILITY. SECRETARY OF STATE CAMPINOS NOTED U.S. AID ALSO IMPORTANT SYMBOLICALLY. PRESIDENT AGREED.

B. INTERNATIONAL PRESS VERY UNFAIR IN COVERAGE OF PORTUGAL. HE HOPED I WOULD MAKE MY OWN IMDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT. ASSURED HIM I WOULD.

C. PORTUGAL NEEDS TO BUILD A PROFESSIONAL ARMY. ONLY FIVE PERCENT OF SOLDIERS ARE PROFESSIONALS. IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION, HE SAID GOP HAD DEVELOPED NEW MISSION FOR MILITARY. I ASKED IF IT WOULD BRING THEM CLOSER TO NATO, AND HE SAID YES.

D. PORTUGAL IS ACTIVELY EXAMINING PURCHASE OF P-3'S FOR ASW PATROL. PRESIDENT WAS AWARE OF DETAILS OF NEGOTIATIONS, INCLUDING COST.

E. ANGOLA HAD GREAT FUTURE. PULLING THREE COMPETING FACTIONS TOGETHER HAD BEEN CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENT. MOZAMBIQUE HAS SERIOUS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. AT THIS POINT I MENTIONED CONGRESSIONAL INTENT IN PORTION OF U.S. AID GOING TO AFRICA, AND ASKED THAT GOP GIVE ME ITS VIEW ON SUBJECT. HIS ONLY RESPONSE WAS TO EMPHASIZE HOW MUCH AID GOP ITSELF HAD PUT INTO AFRICAN TERRITORIES.

3. PRESIDENT CLOSED CONVERSATION BY REPEATING HOPE I WOULD MAKE INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT OF SITUATION, COUPLED WITH WARM ASSURANCES I WOULD HAVE COMPLETE ACCESS TO HIM AND HIS MINISTERS.

4. MORNING PRESS COVERAGE OF CEREMONY (BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY) INCLUDED FULL TEXT OF AID ANNOUNCEMENT. CARLUCCI

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